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AMERICA'S 'JANE BONDS' RISK DEATH ON DARING 007 SPY MISSIONS

■ Victor Marchetti, 55, was a CIA officer for 15 years and is the author of The CIA and the Cult of the Intelligence, a nonfiction best seller about life inside the agency, and The Rope-Dancer, a spy novel. He tells how the spy business is no longer the private preserve of James Bond and his macho buddies. Now, there are Jane Bonds — female 007s — just as good, sometimes better, at the spy game. Here are some of the more dramatic examples of their daring missions:



Ex-CIA agent Victor Marchetti has uncovered women spies.

M By Victor Marchetti
ARTHA PETERSON has been described as wholesome, outgoing — an all-American type. At 5 ft. 7 in. with frosted blond hair and pushing 33, she was quite glamorous.

A few years ago Martha Peterson, a vice consul at the American Embassy in Moscow, drove from the embassy to the center of the Soviet capital. Next she switched to a streetcar, then a subway and still later a taxi. A few hours after leaving the embassy, she stopped under a bridge spanning the Moskva River that meanders through the middle of the communist capital. In the stone facing of the arch, in a hollowed-out space, she inserted a stone she had taken from the large purse she was carrying.

Immediately several Soviet secret police appeared and grabbed her. Late that night at Lubyanka, the infamous KGB headquarters, she was interrogated for several hours by tough, hard-fisted Soviet intelligence officers.

They confronted her with the "rock" she'd tried to plant under the bridge. It contained a miniature camera, an electronic eavesdropping device, several gold coins and two poison capsules. Nice, friendly "Mrs. Peterson" was in deep trouble.

But her captors could not break her. Finally, they summoned U.S. Ambassador Malcolm Tboon to the Foreign Ministry. He was presented with the spy material she had attempted to deliver to one of her secret agents in Moscow.



Superspy Martha Peterson with her boss, U.S. Consul C. Gross.

The ambassador dutifully apologized and agreed to the Soviet demand that she leave the country within 72 hours.

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PENNY ENGEL, who once wanted to be an actress but became instead a French major in college, signed up with the CIA "for excitement" — which is exactly what she got. While

serving in a North African country some years ago, the pretty 23-year-old strawberry blonde with bright blue eyes was given an undercover surveillance assignment.

The CIA had a double agent whose loyalty was in question. He claimed he was meeting regularly with an Arab who was working as a spy for the Soviet KGB and that the enemy agent was providing him with valuable information. But the CIA could not be sure. So Penny was told to see if he was meeting the Soviet agent.

Wearing a djellabah (an Arab black dress with shawl and veil), Penny stationed herself outside the Soviet spy's apartment and waited to see if the CIA agent showed up. It didn't work.

"Arab women identify each other by their eyes," Penny told me. "That's all they can see because of the veils they wear. The Arab women were really giving me the once over. Who among them had blue eyes?"

"I gave up. I could not pull it off. I bungled the mission," she admitted.

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LESLIE DONEGAN was a raven-

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Moslem headgear couldn't quite disguise the strikingly Western features of blond-haired, blue-eyed CIA operative Penny Engel.

haired, dark-eyed beauty. Although she was of Irish origin, she could pass as a Latin-American. Posing as a Venezuelan heiress living in Paris, Leslie's assignment was to locate and make contact with a former CIA operations officer who'd gone bad.

Her target was Philip Agee, a man who had served for years in various Latin American countries and was now about to blow the agency's operations down there sky-high.

All Leslie had to go on was that Agee was probably holed up somewhere on the Parisian Left Bank.

She befriended him and pretended to sympathize with his left-wing politics. She lent him money to continue writing a book that would reveal the names and activities of all the CIA officers he knew of in Latin America. Agee was grateful for Leslie's help, and in an attempt to impress his attractive patron, he unwisely allowed her to read his manuscript.

The CIA arranged for Leslie to get him out of the house while they broke in and made a copy of the manuscript.

The next day, Agee ran off to London, where he eventually published his book. But having been forewarned of its contents, the CIA had already taken the necessary steps to protect its agents and operations in Latin America.